National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

The potential role of health impact assessment in tackling the complexity of climate change adaptation for health

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Year: 2011
Journal: Health Promotion Journal of Australia : Official Journal of Australian Association of Health Promotion Professionals. 22 Spec No: S48-53

Abstract:

Managing an issue of the magnitude, scope and complexity of climate change is a daunting prospect, yet one which nations around the world must face. Climate change is an issue without boundaries--impacts will cut across administrative and geographical borders and be felt by every sector of society. Responses to climate change will need to employ system approaches that take into account the relationships that cross organisational and sectoral boundaries. Solutions designed in isolation from these interdependencies will be unlikely to succeed, squandering opportunities for long-term effective adaptation. Health Impact Assessment (HIA) provides a structural approach to identify, evaluate and manage health impacts of climate change that is inclusive of a wide range of stakeholders. Climate change will affect decision-making across every government level and sector and the health implications of these decisions can also be addressed with HIA. Given the nature of the issue, HIA of climate change will identify a large number of variables that influence the type and extent of health impacts and the management of these impacts. In order to implement the most effective adaptation measures, it is critica that an understanding of the interactions between these variables is developed. The outcome of HIA of climate change can therefore be strengthened by the introduction of system dynamics tools, such as causal loop diagrams, that are designed to examine interactions between variables and the resulting behaviour of complex systems.

Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Unspecified Exposure

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

General Geographical Feature

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Australasia

Health Impact: ☑

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☑

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Other Racial/Ethnic Subgroup: Indigenous populations

Resource Type: ☑

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion

Timescale: ☑

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment: ☑

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content